

**CLAIMS**

We claim:

1. A computer implemented method of performing a business process, the method comprising:
  - (a) running in a business process execution engine a compiled business process application that includes selection criteria for selecting partners; and
  - (b) utilizing the selection criteria to dynamically select a partner.
2. The method of claim 1, further including:
  - (c) receiving at least one attribute of the partner;.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the at least one attribute comprises identifying information.
4. The method of claim 2, wherein the at least one attribute comprises selection information.
5. The method of claim 2, wherein the at least one attribute comprises a digital certificate.
6. The method of claim 2, wherein the at least one attribute comprises custom business partner data.
7. The method of claim 2, wherein the at least one attribute comprises an identification of a preferred document format.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the document format comprises an extensible markup language schema.

9. The method of claim 2, further including:

(d) utilizing the at least one attribute of the partner while running the business process application.

10. The method of claim 1, further including:

(c) while running the business process application, binding instances of a business partner variable to the partner identified in (b).

11. A method of creating a computer implemented business process, the method comprising:

(a) defining a business process that includes criteria for selecting business partners;  
(b) compiling the business process; and  
(c) dynamically managing business partners without recompiling the business process.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein (c) comprises adding business partners.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein (c) comprises deleting business partners.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein (c) comprises modifying attributes of business partners.

15. The method of claim 11, wherein (c) is performed by at least one business partner.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein (c) comprises at least one business partner modifying at least one attribute of the at least one business partner.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the at least one attribute comprises price information.

18. A computer readable medium containing computer-executable instructions for causing a computer device to perform a business process, the instructions comprise: executing the business process that includes selection criteria for selecting partners such that business partner data can be modified without modifying the business process.

19. A computer implemented system for performing a business process, the system comprising:

a computer readable medium containing a business process application that includes selection criteria for selecting business partners;

a computer readable medium containing a list of business partners and attributes of business partners; and

a business process execution engine that executes the business process application and selects business partners from the computer readable medium in accordance with the selection criteria.

20. The system of claim 19, wherein the attributes comprise contact information.

21. The system of claim 19, wherein the attributes comprise price information.

22. The system of claim 19, wherein the attributes comprise an identification of a preferred document format.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the document format comprises an extensible markup language schema.